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The chemical structure is arsphenamine, i.e., 4, 4'-arsenobis(2-aminophenol)dihydrochloride, called Salvarsan commercially, first prepared by Paul Ehrlich and Sahachiro Hata in 1909 for medical use as an antisyphilitic drug. The Institute for Chemical Research originates from the Special Institute for Chemistry, founded in 1915 as a satellite facility of the College of Science, Kyoto Imperial University (the ancestor of the Faculty of Science, Kyoto University) with the intension of both exploring and manufacturing medical drugs such as Salvarsan; they had been in short supply because of World War I. The Institute for Chemical Research was established in 1926 as a general institution of chemical research closely connected to the related laboratories in the Faculties of Science, Medicine, Engineering and Agriculture. This Institute aimed to pursue fundamental principles in chemistry and their applications, an intension which has been continued until the present day.

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